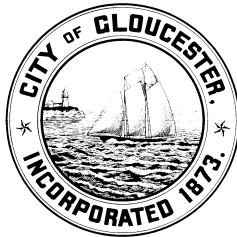


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CITY OF GLOUCESTER
HARBOR PLANNING

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Members:

Rick Noonan, Planning Board
Paul Vitale [Absent], Fisheries Commission
Ralph Pino, Waterways Board
Greg Verga, City Council
Paul McGearry, [Absent]

Jeffrey Amero
Ann Molloy
Marcy Pregent
Ron Schrank [Absent]
Alternates: Mike Potter &
Steve Cefalo [Absent]

Also in attendance: Sarah Garcia; Kathryn Glenn; Peggy and Don Huff, Building Center.

2013 Harbor Plan

May 21, 2013
Kyrouz Auditorium, City Hall
7 - 9 pm

Meeting called to order at 7:03 PM by Chair Rick Noonan.

Approval of Minutes from April 30, 2013. Corrections: In the 2nd paragraph on page 6 the line that states "DPA Master plan is not a requirement" should read: "Master Plan is a requirement of the Harbor Plan if a DPA is part of the Harbor Planning Area". Strike from the record: "Chapter 91 exists for Gloucester because there is a DPA".

MOTION: On motion by Councilor Verga, seconded by Mr. Amero, the Committee voted to approve the minutes from April 30, 2013 as amended. Mr. Pino and Mr. Noonan abstain due to absence at April meeting.

Review Chapter 4 recommendations

Ms. Garcia stated the discussion at the last meeting was useful and it was decided that continuing this discussion would also be useful. Discussing Section 4 will be valuable to the process of hiring a consultant. Section 4 is located under the 2009 Harbor Plan that is in the back of the book that Commission members received. **Mr. Pino** stated this process seems like it is looking at what has been done before and taking baby steps, but is always within the confines of the DPA. This does not seem to go very far. **Mr. Pino** asked the Commission to think about what is realistic with the Harbor. He would like to see one vision established for the Harbor, but does

not feel as though people really talk about a vision. **Ms. Garcia** stated that developing a vision is a great idea and she thought starting at Section 4 would be the best process as it would encourage discussion regarding what fits in the Harbor Plan and what does not. **Mr. Pino** stated there is a huge split between how people feel about the DPA on the Waterways Board. **Ms. Molloy** stated that some studies have shown that people in other ports have regretted losing their working waterfront for various reasons. **Mr. Pino** stated that a vision focused only on a working waterfront is too parochial. Gloucester was primarily a blue collar community and income has dropped over the last 30 years. The result is Gloucester has become a poorer community. He discussed how people leave the community to educate their children and move back once they have graduated. The Commission has to be realistic about needing a real tax base and the actual needs of the community.

Mr. Potter stated that both Mr. Pino and Ms. Molloy are right and there is a way to get to a place where both sides are getting their vision. One way to get there by making the land more valuable. The clear definition of the entire port has to be water related. The next premise should be that every square linear foot of the waterfront, if it is developed, has to have slips. He stated that what Mr. Pino wants can be done by having buildings with a higher value pay a fee that is then utilized to improve public land. **Ms. Molloy** stated that Gloucester is currently in a DPA so some of those things are not an option. **Ms. Garcia** stated that the Committee has been clear that people are welcome to speak out of the box.

Mr. Potter stated that as he sees it no one has answered his challenge as to why there has to be a DPA in the next plan. It says voluntary in Chapter 91. **Ms. Glenn** clarified that the Harbor Plan does not allow for the removal of the Port Designation. **Mr. Potter** asked if the Port Designation can be removed. **Ms. Glenn** stated that it can, but not through the Harbor Plan. Any language can be put into the Harbor Plan, but the Secretary can only approve those parts of the Harbor Plan which are legally allowable. **Ms. Garcia** stated that we will not be boxed in by rules. It will be written based on what the Committee, with community buy in, believes should be the vision for the Harbor. This is the safe space to say what people really believe will move the Harbor forward. **Councilor Verga** said that the values of the community, as well as the market, should drive this process. There is somewhere in between Mr. Pino's vision and the idea that if we change it will turn into Disneyland. He will not get behind condominiums on the waterfront, but believes there is a middle ground.

Mr. Potter stated that the 50% can factor into the Harbor Plan by saying the Harbor overall, not each individual property, can meet the 50% quota. **Mr. Noonan** asked how that would work. He asked if the property owner would donate land for a park to meet the 50%. **Mr. Potter** stated that property owners would need to meet certain requirements regarding dockage, but if they were not water dependent use would pay a mitigating fee to be used by the City. The citizens could then decide what they want to do with the money. **Ms. Pregent** asked who can afford to pay a \$1.5 million fee. If the property is owned, taxes are paid, and there are no requirements then the City cannot tell developers what to do with their land. **Mr. Noonan** asked Ms. Glenn to discuss in more detail the concept of offsets in the Harbor Plan. **Ms. Glenn** stated that a Harbor Plan can meet the DPA requirements in creative ways. For example, if buildings are going to be

taller than are outlined in the Chapter 91 regulations, then maybe offset that with more open space. The requirements need to be met, but there are ways to be creative about it.

Mr. Pino stated that the 50% rule does not work. It has been tried on every piece in the Harbor. **Ms. Molloy** stated that if the value of property is changed so that it is at developer's prices it will drive out the marine industrial use. Marine industrial uses create jobs, where condos do not. **Mr. Potter** stated that will not be the case if a coverage ratio, such as 50%, is established. Then 50% of the properties will be at developer's prices and the other 50% will be for marine industrial use. **Mr. Pino** discussed various examples of buildings that were meant to meet the 50% marine industrial use quota and are vacant or were unsuccessful. **Ms. Garcia** stated that it is true, the 50% designation had too many strings attached. However, it is worth discussing if there are any changes that could be made to that rule in order to make it more useable. **Mr. Noonan** asked whether that is a local or State regulation. **Ms. Garcia** stated that it is a local change, but was developed by a task force including many people.

Mr. Potter stated there are many ways to make this work, but should not, under any circumstances, give up the dockage. **Mr. Amero** stated that Gloucester is a DPA now and the Commission is working within these guidelines to make it work for all involved. What should be done is working with the State to figure out incentives for keeping the DPA in Gloucester. If the consensus of the Commission is it no longer wants the DPA, then that is on the leadership to determine if the whole City is on board.

There was discussion regarding dredging in the Gloucester Harbor and the reasons for it being delayed. **Ms. Glenn** stated that putting dredging needs in the Harbor Plan is an important and smart strategy. **Ms. Garcia** stated that she has not experienced a high demand of people requesting dredging. **Ms. Glenn** stated that CZM is more likely to support harbors in a DPA for dredge money than non-DPA harbors. **Ms. Pregent** asked if the Commission can get information from Cruiseport as to whether Gloucester would get more ships into the Harbor if it were dredged. Having more containers come into the port has been explored, but she would like to find out if Gloucester's harbor would be suitable for more containers if it were dredged. **Ms. Garcia** discussed an initiative ongoing in Portland, ME regarding offloading cargo ships at different ports. There is currently an RFP for what is called an articulated barge. It is not clear whether or not Gloucester might have a role in this initiative. **Ms. Molloy** stated that if there was somewhere to ship out of Gloucester her company would be using them. She does not believe Gloucester will ever be deep enough for container ships, but could possibly bring in the barges.

Mr. Noonan firmly believes in the working waterfront. There is no growth or increase in jobs with static income situations. The idea is Gloucester has to operate within a Designated Port Area and if staying in the DPA comes up to vote it is a community issue. The Commission is here to talk about policies, guidelines, and initiatives. A discussion regarding a zoning overlay for additional use is highly contentious. **Mr. Potter** stated that his idea is to come up with a zoning package that allows everyone to get what they want. When you mix the zoning with the State regulations you get an unusable stew. **Ms. Garcia** stated that there are some examples where that is done, but Gloucester is too complicated.

Ms. Pregent asked if there had been any further discussion regarding having specific areas of the DPA lifted. **Ms. Garcia** stated that treating areas of the DPA differently was suggested in

the 2004 planning effort and was not well received. She added that there is a value in looking at market drivers and this may be an area where consultant support is helpful. Gloucester needs to build off its best asset which is the ocean and planning has always suffered by not mixing uses. **Mr. Potter** commented on the format of the Harbor Plan. He added that if the new plan is done in the same format of the previous plan, it will be equally unsuccessful. It should be done as a business plan. It needs to document where we are right now, then where do we want to be in five years, then how do we get there. Those then need to be broken down in order to make a working document. **Mr. Potter** continued to discuss this in further detail with examples.

Ms. Garcia stated that if the Commission can decide tonight the areas which it wants to focus on, then that can be the start. **Mr. Noonan** asked how do you apply a very focused perspective over the entire Harborfront. **Mr. Potter** stated that once you get all of the regulatory conditions in, the conflicts will become obvious and then you address them with the “how do we get there”. **Mr. Pino** stated that the Commission needs to have a vision of where it is going before it can begin developing any type of plan. **Mr. Noonan** said that is our vision and the Commission has tried to have that discussion before. He understands the multiplier effect of transient boaters, as regards the economy, but he also understands that Gloucester draws tourists for having a working waterfront and fishermen. He posed several questions to the group: How do we support the industry that we have? How do you manage the relationship with various individual property owners? How do you hang on to what people want to see in conjunction with mixed use, tourism, and other uses that have yet to be seen?

Mr. Pino asked why can there not be the tradeoff that Mr. Potter discussed. The Harbor needs to be mixed use it cannot be black and white. There needs to be discussion about what mixed use is and how it would look. **Ms. Garcia** stated that there is a vision in the 2009 Harbor Plan and it may be useful to discuss whether or not it is realistic. **Ms. Molloy** disagrees that the Harbor is going the way Ralph sees it and she provided some examples of ways to revitalize the fishing industry. She added that her business is expanding non-stop. **Ms. Garcia** stated that she is doing everything to encourage diversified use and technology in the Harbor. **Mr. Noonan** asked Mr. Amero for his five to ten year view of the Harbor. **Mr. Amero** stated that he would like to see more mixed use and not lose Gloucester’s identity in fishing boats. He would like to see the waterways open up for the larger boats that used to come into the Harbor. Also, he would like to see the properties that are falling into the Harbor repaired. He stated that change seems difficult within the current DPA regulations.

Ms. Garcia stated that one of the drivers can be a little bit of what Mr. Potter was saying. If you allowed higher value uses on upper floors, then they can subsidize marine industrial use on lower floors. An economic analysis could show whether or not that is feasible. She asked why banks will not support the marine uses. **Mr. Pino** replied that it is primarily due to distrust of the regulations. There is no predicting how the regulations will limit the value of these industries. **Ms. Pregent** stated that she would like to see continued fishing use on the waterfront. There are some people that are making a good living and she would like to see them flourish. She would also like to see more mixed use while maintaining the current industries. One issue preventing the development of downtown is parking, which needs to be addressed. She would like to see a focus on driving the economy of downtown Gloucester. **Ms. Garcia** stated that parking comes

up periodically, but there is resistance from people who would finance parking. If parking really is an issue downtown there needs to be a serious suggestion from this committee about who would fund a parking garage. There would need to be a commitment from businesses to help finance this project. **Mr. Pino** stated that Gloucester critically needs parking and believes it would be possible to find businesses or individuals who would buy spaces in a garage. His vision strongly supports fishing, but the reality of Gloucester being an industrial port left in the 80s when they stopped oil drilling on the banks. He added that conservation groups have more money, power, and ammunition than the fishing industry. There may very well be fishing and inventions regarding fishing, but Gloucester certainly needs less space to support the industry. He stated that Gloucester need to have mixed use and recreational boating. Recreational boating would bring many secondary services to the Harbor. If Gloucester does not radically change the DPA the Commission is completely wasting its time.

Councilor Verga stated that his vision does not include condominiums, but is somewhere between Mr. Pino and Ms. Molloy's. What Gloucester has now does not work, but saying the fishing industry is going to be dead so we should start kicking them out now does not work either. We need to find a way to preserve the heritage we have now. He added that the DPA is too restrictive and the Commission needs to have open discussions in order to come to terms with something that most people can live with.

Mr. Noonan opened the meeting for public comment. **Ms. Huff** stated that compromise is the way of getting things really done. **Mr. Potter** stated that the Building Center's property is linked strategically with I4-C2. **Mr. Noonan** asked if Mr. and Ms. Huff would share a five year vision. **Ms. Huff** stated that there is a space and place for everyone's view. The Harbor does not work the way it is now and it needs some attention from the community. She added that for a lot of the change necessary it will require the warring factions coming together and discussing matters civilly. She expressed her interest in sitting in on future meetings.

Mr. Noonan stated that the Commission is currently operating in a meeting format, not a public hearing format. The notion is that at some point the Commission will need to produce a document that is approvable. He added that at the end of the day the Commission is trying to generate commerce and tax base to help the community. If you do not increase your commercial tax base, taxes go up on residential properties. **Ms. Garcia** stated that steps have been taken that are thought to help companies decide to relocate to Gloucester and she provided some examples. She suggested the Commission members listen to the discussion regarding the hydro power line that is coming through Maine and the potential for it to come by this Harbor. **Mr. Noonan** discussed the situation regarding the Suez. He added that whatever your view is, energy consumption is not going down and Gloucester needs to be thinking long term. The Commission needs to really consider what it might mean long term to pull out of the DPA. He would like to maintain the perspective of planning for the future versus maintaining what currently exists.

Mr. Noonan stated that the Commission has talked about one very small piece of property down on Commercial Street for five years and are still talking about it. **Mr. Potter** stated that it all comes down to zoning. **Ms. Garcia** stated that it takes \$1,000 to create \$10 in taxes, one million gets you \$10,000 in taxes, and so on. Every year there are a couple of millions of dollars of investment in the City. The fact that Gloucester is a community that has a Harbor and other

quality of life attributes is what encourages companies like Varian to continue to invest in the City. She added that sometimes the value you get out of your Harbor is not necessarily dollar for dollar. **Mr. Noonan** stated that properties around the Harbor contribute less than 1% of the tax base; the idea is to bring commerce that will flow money around to various local companies. **Mr. Pino** said if you look at a place like Varian, it may be more attractive if there was a marina for their people to use. They do not use any of the hotels in Gloucester, but they rent thousands of rooms each year. **Mr. Noonan** said he has heard the same thing from Gorton's. **Councilor Verga** stated that the Commission is back at the extremes. Spaces in the Harbor are not being filled with allowable uses and this means there is room for tweaking regulations. What we have is not working for what is out there. **Mr. Noonan** provided an example from Denmark of a thriving mixed use Harbor to demonstrate that the notion of compromise and mixed use can happen.

A motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 PM.